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AUTHOR Hyde, Richard Bruce
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this essay is to consider some of the practical implications of Martin Heideger's view that "Language is the house of Being," for the academic study of cultural transformation and intercultural communication. The paper describes the ontological basis of Heidegger's work, and the inquiry into Being, and contains sections on "Speaking Being Interculturally," "Saying," "The Unsaid," "The Transformation of Culture," and "Language and Counterculture." The paper attempts to show that the world is always shaped by language, and that its fundamental contingency may not be directly experienced until the experiential world of everyday experience is deconstructed as it can be by the use of psychedelic drugs. It also presents the Heideggerian view that cultural transformation must be accomplished by an indigenous thinking, and that, for example, the promises of Eastern mysticism for European and American youth during the sixties were ultimately unfulfilled since the ontological environment of Western culture, the roots which the European concepts traced could not reach the wellspring. Seventy notes are included. (PRA)

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Richard Bruce Hyde
Department of Speech Communication
St. Cloud State University
720 Fourth Avenue South
St. Cloud, Minnesota 56301

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Ontology, Language, and Culture

In his 1947 essay, "Letter on Humanism," Martin Heidegger made what is perhaps the most succinct and widely quoted statement of the linguistic ontology which was central to his later thought:

> Language is the house of Being. In its home man dwells. Those who think and those who create with words are the guardians of this home.[1]

The purpose of this essay is to consider some of the practical implications of this view for the study of cultural transformation and intercultural communication.

Heidegger's work is based in the notion of the ontological difference, which posits two distinct domains of inquiry for human thought, the ontic and the ontological. Ontic inquiry "is concerned with entities, and the facts about them."[2] That is, we are engaged in ontic inquiry when we are asking questions about beings. This includes all entities, such as hammers, shoes, and so forth; and in particular it includes inquiry into the "facts" about human beings. Thus all scientific discourse is ontic inquiry.[3]

The ontological domain, on the other hand, is the domain of the question of Being. This question is generally neglected, since it is considered to be either trivial or self-evident;[4] but, for Heidegger, it is fundamental to all other questions. Heidegger therefore devotes much of his attention to the formulation of the question of the nature of Being.[5] In fact,

the most significant difference between the two domains of inquiry is that, in the domain of Being, the question is not asked in order to be answered; rather, it is the asking of the question which is the important event. In that domain of inquiry, the questioning itself creates a relationship between those who are doing the asking (beings) and that which is being asked about (Being).[6] This being-Being relationship, in all its inescapable ambiguity, is Heidegger's central concern. In the words of Heideggerian scholar Joan Stambaugh, "the relationship is more fundamental than what is related."[7]

The question of Being, not closed by an answer, remains open to generate further questions; thus the questions with which this essay will deal are generated by the question of Being, and by the question of the ontological difference. Specifically, I am concerned with the communicative aspects of Heidegger's thinking: those portions of his later work in which he addressed the relationship between Being and language, and particularly of language in interaction. I am a student of that growing body of work which is devoted to study of the rhetoric-philosophy relationship, a relationship whose intimacy has been articulated by Ernesto Grassi: "every original philosophy is rhetoric and every true and not exterior rhetoric is philosophy."[8] While Heidegger did not use the term "rhetoric" to designate the generative speaking about which he wrote, his thinking makes an important contribution to our understanding of the relationship which Grassi has described.

Consistent with the implications of Grassi's phrase, "original rhetoric," I am interested in the possibility of speaking Being rather than speaking about Being. Thus the questions which animate my own work concern the implications for interaction of language which is ontologically determinative (i.e., "the house of Being"). That is, if Being is in language, where is Being in language-in-use? If language is "the house of Being," is Being communicated along with the language in which it is housed? If so, how? What is the channel of its transmission? What distinguishes a conversation in which Being is communicated, and what are the distinctive outcomes of such a conversation for its participants? These questions, at whose answers Heidegger hints intriguingly, pose an important and challenging task for communication scholars: the exploration of the possibility of an ontological rhetoric, a rhetoric which consciously and, by design, speaks Being.

In undertaking this task, however, the first matter which must always be confronted is the resistance which is aroused by an inquiry into Being. Before proceeding, therefore, I will insert a prefatory note on this matter; my purpose in doing so is (in Heideggerian terminology) to appropriate that resistance--that is, to recognize its existence and nature, and to allow it to be, so that the discussion is not owned and shaped by the resistance.

The source of the resistance is easy to locate. As Heidegger points out, Being is at the same time the most mundane

and the most profound of concepts.[9] Everything in the universe is. Therefore "being," at a trivial level, is the most casually employed and widely understood of terms. And yet, as Heidegger also states, this simplest of terms is simultaneously the deepest and most fundamental, because to place Being in question "aims at the ground of what is insofar as it is"; and particularly because "in this questioning one kind of [being] persists in coming to the fore, namely the men who ask the question."[10]

In other words, to question Being is to question our own essence, and here the resistance arises: we would rather leave well enough alone. Human beings' kind of being, says Heidegger,

> demands that any ontological interpretation which sets itself the goal of exhibiting the phenomena in their primordiality, should capture the Being of this entity, in spite of this entity's own tendency to cover things up. Existential analysis, therefore, constantly has the character of doing violence, whether to the claims of the everyday interpretation, or to its complacency and its tranquilized obviousness.[11]

Thus we resist the violence which a true inquiry into Being must inevitably inflict upon our customary self-understanding. In addition, I suggest, for scholars--and especially for communication "scientists"--the subject of Being is likely to seem annoyingly amorphous and epistemologically slippery, and to recall too easily the bad old days of touchy-feely, encounter groups, and Be Here Now.

I have attempted here briefly to unconceal these difficulties, so that they no longer lurk menacingly in the

background of this discussion. With this preamble, I will return to Heidegger's view that language is the locus of Being.

As I have stated, language was a central concern for Heidegger, although whether he ever articulated what could be called a "philosophy of language" is arguable. As Joseph J. Kockelmans has pointed out, "What Heidegger calls language is very seldom dealt with by other philosophers; and, when it is, it very rarely appears under the general heading 'language.'"[12] L.M. Vail has echoed this view, observing that Heidegger's writing on language is "focused mainly on one problem, the nature and cosmic origin of language."[13] Heidegger himself asserted that his concern was the essence of language, and that to address this matter involved "something other than philosophy of language."[14]

Philosophy or not, the subject of language was "the most constant theme" of Heidegger's writing subsequent to Being and Time, according to Richard Kearney. [15] Further, in this later work, the emphasis was increasingly placed upon the generative nature of language; in Kockelmans' words, "attention turns from a concern for language from the viewpoint of man's speech to a concern for language's essential contribution to the very possibility of man's speech."[16] Heidegger refers to this paradox--that language is the source of speaking, rather than vice-versa--in this passage from "The Nature of Language":

> What we speak of, language, is always ahead of us. . . . We speak of language, but constantly seem to be speaking merely about language, while in fact we are already letting language, from

> within language, speak to us, in language, of itself, saying its nature.[17]

Thus, for Heidegger, not only is language the locus of Being, but, in addition, language itself speaks forth its ontological nature. In combination, these simple but radical statements form the basis for exploring the possibility that cultural difference and change is fundamentally a linguistic phenomenon. That is: on the Heideggerian view, what we are is a product of the language we speak; and the ontological nature of that language is spoken to us and for us even as we, unknowingly, allow ourselves to be spoken by it. Thus, when we speak different languages--or (as I will discuss below) when we speak different vocabularies within a language--we are simultaneously spoken as different beings.

Speaking Being Interculturally

Heidegger's most explicit discussion of the "intercultural" implications of this view is found in his "Dialogue on Language."[18] This dialogue presents a conversation "between a Japanese and an Inquirer": the Inquirer is Heidegger himself, and the Japanese is a philosopher who has studied with Heidegger's former student, Count Shuzo Kuki.

The conversation between the two philosophers develops as a graceful dialogic dance, whose delicate partnering, characterized by mutual hints and hesitations, is designed to allow the language of the dialogue to speak--that is, to allow the ontological nature of language to speak through the conversation,

to ensure that "each word in each case is given its full--most often hidden--weight."[19] It is only in such dialogic use, insists Heidegger, that language's hidden weight is revealed: "A speaking from language," he says, "could only be a dialogue."[20] And he is emphatic that he does not mean merely a discussion about language: "Speaking about language turns language almost inevitably into an object," he points out. "And then," his companion adds, "its reality vanishes."[21]

In this interaction with the Japanese philosopher, therefore, Heidegger is attempting to demonstrate the nature of ontological dialogue, conversation which unconceals in interaction the ontological possibility of language, and thus speaks Being in full awareness of what it is doing. This last point is important: Heidegger makes clear that we are always speaking our Being, whether we are aware of it or not. What we are, our way of being, is always given to us by the ontological assumptions embedded in and articulated by the language which we speak and think. Our saying shapes our being:

> Actual language at any given moment is the happening of this saying, in which a people's world historically arises for it. . . . In such saying, the concepts of an historical people's nature, i.e., of its belonging to world history, are formed for that folk, before it.[22]

But if we have not appropriated this possibility of language--that is, if we have not recognized, allowed, and owned it--we have not yet come fully into our human heritage as speakers of Being.[23]

At one point in the dialogue with the Japanese philosopher, Heidegger addresses specifically the intercultural implications of the view that Being is linguistic and communicable--that is, the problem which arises when the participants in an ontological conversation represent from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Heidegger remarks that he and Count Kuki (his former student) had often discussed "the question whether it is necessary and rightful for Eastasians to chase after the European conceptual systems." The Japanese responds that he, too, sees the danger in this tendency, citing his concern that "we will let ourselves be led astray by the wealth of concepts which the spirit of the European languages has in store, and will look down on what claims our existence, as on something that is vague and amorphous."[24]

But Heidegger insists that a greater and more subtle danger threatens than simply the seductive glitter of Western concepts, a danger which is "all the more menacing just by being more inconspicuous." In the following passage, he decribes his experience of that danger, as he had encountered it in his dialogues with Count Kuki--dialogues which had been conducted in the German language:

> Inquirer: The danger of our dialogues was hidden in language itself, not in <u>what</u> we discussed, nor in the <u>way in which</u> we tried to do so. . . .
>
> Japanese: The languages of the dialogue shifted everything into European.
>
> Inquirer: Yet the dialogue tried to <u>say</u> the essential

nature of Eastasian art and poetry.

Japanese: Now I am beginning to understand better where you smell the danger. The language of the dialogue constantly destroyed the possibility of saying what the dialogue was about.

Inquirer: Some time ago I called language, clumsily enough, the house of Being. If man by virtue of his language dwells within the claim and call of Being, then we Europeans presumably dwell in an entirely different house than Eastasian man.

Japanese: Assuming that the languages of the two are not merely different, but are other in nature, and radically so.

Inquirer: And so, a dialogue from house to house remains nearly impossible.[25]

I call particular attention to the two differences which Heidegger notes between Eastasian and European languages. On the one hand, there is difference at the conceptual level, the difference between the systems of concepts constructed by the two cultures; this difference, we may assume, is not insurmountable, since the Japanese philosopher has already seen and regretted the adoption of European concepts by his compatriots. On the other hand, there is another more fundamental and perhaps insurmountable difference embedded in the languages of the two cultures: this is the ontological character of the languages, and its distinction from the merely conceptual is important to keep in mind. The concern of this essay is to discover the locus of Being in the communication process; Heidegger is suggesting here that this locus is distinct from the conceptual. As was noted above, to speak about Being--to communicate concepts--is not necessarily to speak Being.

Two other points should be noted here which are central to a Heideggerian view of language, and are thus important for the purpose of this essay. The first concerns the nature of saying; the second concerns the communication of the unsaid.

Saying

Heidegger's statement that the dialogue with Count Kuki tried to "say" the nature of Eastasian art and poetry, does not refer simply to an attempt to describe or explain an existing concept. The term "say" has a specific ontological meaning for Heidegger. It designates the unconcealing power of language: that is, the ability of language to unconceal entities in their Being, to speak them as they are.[26] For Heidegger, the power to say, and thereby to unconceal, is inherent in the constitution of human beings: our true nature is to serve as a clearing in the world for the appearance of Being, an opening for the unconcealment of entities in their essence. Thus the Greek term which has traditionally been translated as "truth" is aletheia, which means unconcealment.[27] In the event of their emergence into aletheia, the unconcealed entities are true. Immediately, of course, they are subject to distortion; this is inevitable, given the variety of perspectives from which they may be viewed. Nevertheless, in that moment of initial unconcealment in the clearing, these entities ring with essential truth; and saying is the speaking which unconceals them in their truth.[28]

Further, saying is a speaking which simultaneously provides an opening for the unconcealment of that which it says. In our everyday speaking we have lost sight of our nature as the clearing for Being; we do not normally speak in accord with our ultimate human possibility, and thus the clearing for saying must be ongoingly regenerated in order for the saying to occur. "Such saying is a projecting of the clearing," says Heidegger, "in which announcement is made of what it is beings come into the open as."[29]

To speak of truths and essences, as I have, is immediately to call up charges of objectivism; therefore, I want to make clear the nature of the speaking I am distinguishing here. Heidegger is not proposing that there is an existing set of truths, and that saying is the ability accurately to replicate these existing truths. It is not that the world is a certain way, and we are accurately describing that world. On the contrary:

> truth does not exist in itself beforehand, somewhere among the stars, only later to descend elsewhere among beings. This is impossible for the reason alone that it is after all only the openness of beings that first affords the possibility of a somewhere and of a place filled by present beings.[30]

That is, we are the only "somewhere" there is, the only clearing in the world in which Being can be unconcealed, the only opening in which truth can occur. Being, as the unconcealment of truth, cannot be except in the opening provided by human saying; thus it is only when a being clears itself for saying that truth can

happen. Saying is not the replication of truth, but its generation.

However, as Heidegger also makes clear, such saying is not arbitrary; and the nature of the relationship between what we are given as human beings (the earth) and what we can create through saying (the world) is one of Heidegger's most deeply thinkable ideas. Saying is

> never an arbitrary demand. . . . [It] is the opening up or disclosure of that into which human being as historical is already cast. This is the earth and, for an historical people, its earth, the self-closing ground on which it rests together with everything that it already is, though still hidden from itself. It is, however, its world, which prevails in virtue of the relation of human being to the unconcealedness of Being. For this reason, everything with which man is endowed must, in the projection, be drawn up from the closed ground and expressly set upon this ground.[31]

Thus, through saying, we unconceal what is; but to say "what is" is not the same as saying "what was before it was said." To say is to bring ontological possibility into being-true, generating truth through unconcealment.

Before Newton articulated his laws, says Heidegger, they were not "true." On the other hand, this does not mean that they were false. "Through Newton the laws became true and with them, entities became accessible in themselves to Dasein [human being]."[32] That is, Newton's laws enable us to see, and have access to, the universe in a new way; and that way appears to us to be the way "it always was." What we call the "ring of truth" is exactly this feeling that "it always was," as Heidegger states

here: "Once entities have been uncovered, they show themselves precisely as entities which beforehand already were. Such uncovering is the kind of Being which belongs to 'truth.'"[33] Thus truth is the unconcealment of a possibility which was not, but which rings for us in its consistency with the design of world.

It is important to remember that Heidegger is not describing an existing state of affairs here. Like Newton, he is thinking into being-true an idea which will enable a certain access to ourselves and our world. To join him on his path of thinking does not mean to believe or understand him, but rather to think it into being-true for ourselves.

Unconcealment occurs in language, since "language alone brings what is, as something that is, into the Open for the first time. . . . Language, by naming beings for the first time, first brings beings to word and appearance."[34] It should be noted that the language to which Heidegger usually refers when he is describing ontological saying is poetry. However, he also states that "Language itself is poetry in the essential sense," and that poetry is able to achieve what it does in language because "language preserves the original nature of poetry."[35] That is, "language is the happening in which for man beings first disclose themselves to him each time as beings."[36] Thus, as I have shown, Heidegger also posits dialogue as a scene of language's unconcealing power.

Therefore, when Heidegger speaks of an attempt to say, in dialogue, the nature of art and poetry, he means that the dialogue must generate it, must announce it into the clearing: the participants must reach down into what Heiddegger calls the "wellsprings" of language,[37] and bring into language the truth of the nature of art and poetry. "Only this naming," he says, "nominates beings to their being from out of their being"[38] (i.e., liberates them from earth into world). Thus the problem for an attempt to say the nature of Eastasian art in a European language is that the two languages tap into different ontological wellsprings. Language, for Heidegger, has what Vail calls "a kind of interiority," an embedded field of historical meanings which been has shaped by, and in turn has shaped, the Being of its culture.[39] These meanings constitute the roots which reach to the wellspring. They frame the ontological house in which the culture dwells, and therefore they are the preliminary materials with which the would-be speaker of a truth must work.

The significant point here is that the difficulty is ontological, and not merely conceptual or epistemological. What is sought at the wellspring is unconcealment of the entity (e.g., the nature of art) in its essential being; art is the particular way it is in Eastasian culture because of the historico-linguistic complex which creates the clearing for its being. So the problem for an Eastasian/European dialogue is not merely the translation of terms, but rather the impossibility of art's

being, for a European, what it would be if its being were given by a different linguistic complex.

Heidegger leaves in question the possibility of transcending this cultural barrier. His project--to think, to say, the nature of language--may not, he acknowledges, succeed in reaching the common wellspring:

> This is why I do not yet see whether what I am trying to think as the nature of language is also adequate for the nature of the Eastasian language; whather in the end--which would also be in the beginning--a nature of language can reach the thinking experience, a nature which would offer the assurance that European-Western saying and Eastasian saying will enter into dialogue such that in it there sings something that wells up from a single source.[40]

Thus Heidegger is seeking to develop a language for profound intercultural communication, communication which speaks from the being of one culture to another, and makes possible intercultural saying, rather than simply the exchange of concepts and assertions.

The distinction between the conceptual and ontological realms of language may be illuminated by considering the example of "human rights." This concept was, at some point in our history, brought into existence by human thought. That is, there was a period in human history when the concept of human rights was unthinkable: kings, priests, and nobility alone had "rights." The invention of "human rights" transformed that situation. This invention is an instance of the event posited here by Lionel Trilling: "Now and then it is possible to observe the moral life in process of revising itself . . . by inventing and adding to

itself a new element, some mode of conduct or feeling which hitherto it had not regarded as essential to virtue."[41]

What Trilling calls "the moral life," I propose, is the ontological context, the way of Being; what he refers to as a "mode of conduct or feeling," I suggest, is what Heidegger calls "possibility"--the possibility of a way of Being--and that it is ontological possibility which generates modes of conduct and feelings. That is, what was culturally transformative about "human rights" was the way of being which was given along with the concept. We are different beings in the context given by human rights.

The Unsaid

The second point which I want to make here about the Heideggerian view of language follows from the first: if Being is "housed" in language, and if saying speaks entities such that their being is unconcealed, how can we learn to speak, or to listen for, Being? How is the "invention" of a way of Being, such as that which was given by the concept "human rights," accomplished? What is the channel of Being's communication?

The answer--which is really the opening of a new question, and which stands in a paradoxical relationship with the possibility of saying--is this: the essential nature of Being is such that it must always remain unsaid. That is, Being has not yet been transposed into the language of our speech; it is still unthought.[42] And yet it is the essence of all thought, even

though it has not been articulated: "What is spoken is never, and in no language, what is said."[43] It is, in fact, its unsayability which is its power: "It must remain unsaid because the sayable word receives its determination from the unsayable."[44] This is the irresistable challenge of ontological dialogue. Being must be said as something which is unsaid. Thus the study of ontological dialogue demands that we think a possibility into being: the possibility of communicating the unsaid (and it would obviously trivialize what Heidegger is talking about to characterize it as "nonverval communication").

Heidegger has made a further point which is central to considering Being's communicability: "Being is precisely not a being."[45] This is difficult to grasp, since in speaking about Being we unavoidably reify it. But the unique nature of Being is located in this: that it is the single shared characteristic of all beings. In Heideggerian terms, Being is the horizon which surrounds all existing entities, but which can only be unconcealed through the agency of those entities.[46] Being has no existence on its own, apart from those things which are; clearly, if there is nothing to be, there is no Being. (It could also be said, of course, that if there is no one to run, there is no running. The difference, however, lies in this: running is.)

Being is therefore dependent upon beings for its existence in-the-world; and beings are, in turn, dependent upon Being, since without Being they could not be. (I note here the abundance of reflexivity and tautology into which a discussion of

Being inevitably leads. This is a central feature of ontological rhetoric, as it is of Heidegger's writing. It is of interest for intercultural study that tautology also characterizes writing on Zen, an Eastasian discipline with which Heidegger's thought has been compared.[47])

In this conundrum of Being and beings' mutual dependence is located an important hint regarding the speaking of Being: since Being cannot exist without a being, it cannot be communicated in the usual way. That is, I cannot communicate Being, which as itself does not exist; I can only communicate a being (e.g., a term or concept) which will in turn bring Being along with it, as its unspoken ontological horizon. I can, of course, easily communicate about Being; but we have already seen that this is not the same thing as communicating Being. Being can only be communicated as the unsaid element of a spoken conversational content.

When "human rights" was spoken into the conceptual vocabulary of human beings, it brought along an unspoken ontological horizon. That horizon is the way of being which we associate with the concept "human rights," the way of being in which we dwell and which has subsequently generated a body of behaviors, feelings, and social policies. It is not the concept "human rights" which has been important in our culture, but the way of being; that way of being is an unsaid horizon, which became available with the generation of the cultural conversation which said "human rights."

The Transformation of Culture

The process which I have described here--the process by which a concept is brought into language and brings with it an ontological horizon or way of being, which then generates a body of actions consistent with that horizon--is the process of cultural transformation.

This process has recently been addressed in Richard Rorty's 1989 volume, Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity.[48] In the following passage, Rorty discusses the achievement of human transformation through linguistic change:

> What the Romantics expressed as the claim that imagination, rather than reason, is the central human faculty was the realization that a talent for speaking differently, rather than for arguing well, is the chief instrument of cultural change. What political utopians since the French Revolution have sensed is . . . that changing languages and other social practices may produce human beings of a sort that had never before existed.[49]

For Rorty, such transformation is not to be produced by arguing for change, or even by arguing for the new language which will be the vehicle for change: "The trouble with arguments against a familiar and time-honored vocabulary is that they are expected to be phrased in that very vocabulary."[50] Instead, one simply begins to speak in the new vocabulary. Rorty descibes the method here:

> Interesting philosophy [and Rorty includes Heidegger's thought in this category] is rarely an examination of the pros and cons of a thesis. Usually it is, implicitly or explicitly, a contest between an entrenched vocabulary which has become a nuisance and a half-formed new

> vocabulary which vaguely promises great things. . . . The method is to redescribe lots and lots of things in new ways, until you have created a pattern of linguistic behavior which will tempt the rising generation to adopt it, thereby causing them to look for appropriate new forms of nonlinguistic behavior, for example, the adoption of new scientific equipment or new social institutions.[51]

Thus we can sketch the methodology--the <u>how</u>--of ontological speaking which generates cultural tranformation. One introduces elements into the vocabulary which bring along with them, as their unsaid horizon, a particular way of Being. As members of the culture come to dwell in the way of Being which is given by the new vocabulary, they begin to act in ways which are consistent with that dwelling.[52]

Of course, as I have pointed out, our way of being is already always shaped by our vocabulary, whether or not we recognize that that is what is happening. As Rorty says,

> to put the point in Heidegger's way, 'language speaks man,' languages change in the course of history, and so human beings cannot escape their own historicity. The most they can do is to manipulate the tensions within their own epoch in order to produce the beginnings of the next epoch.[53]

What interests me, and drives my own scholarship and pedagogy, is the possibility that human thinking is now capable of managing these linguistic manipulations in full awareness of their ontological repercussions, and thus of shaping our language in such a way that we knowingly shape the beings we are to become. This is the possibility at the heart of ontological rhetoric: the creation of a rhetoric which is designed, not to leave people

knowing something more or better or different, but rather to leave them in a transformed state of being. Thus transformed, the individuals will proceed to reshape the ontological paradigm which determines the culture.

Language and a Counterculture

To conclude this essay, I want to consider briefly an example from recent American history, in order to propose the view that language is the operative factor in cultural change even when it may look like something else is going on. The example is the American counterculture of the 1960s, and specifically that component of the counterculture which was characterized by participation with psychedelic drugs. It is arguable, of course, whether the countercultural phenomenon of the sixties was a significant stage in an ongoing process of cultural transformation, a stage which this process has subsequently incorporated and built upon; or whether it was merely a cultural disruption, an abortive movement whose momentum was insufficient to achieve its ends. That argument, however, is beyond the scope of this essay. The notion which I wish to propose here concerns the internal workings of the drug culture itself. I am proposing that the alteration of consciousness which has been attributed to psychedelic drugs was in large part a linguistic phenomenon. That is: the hippies were high on language.

Richard Wilmot has examined the use of metaphor as it relates to the use of mind-altering, or "euphoric," drugs.[54] His conclusion:

> An experience of intoxication which lacks metaphors will also lack euphoria. . . .It is the expression of the metaphor which produces the euphoria. If the euphoria is 'drug euphoria' then euphoria results from the expression of euphoric metaphors during the drug experience. It is the appropriate metaphor that is linked to euphoria and not the drug.[55]

From a Heideggerian perspective, we may paraphrase Wilmot: the language of the metaphor provides the ontological horizon within which the drug experience occurs.

Wilmot examines a range of literary expressions of the drug experience, including this from Thomas De Quincey in 1823: "If a man 'whose talk is of oxen' should become an opium-eater, the probability is that . . . he will dream about oxen."[56] Turning to the U.S. drug culture of the 1960s, Wilmot compares that era's metaphorical choices with those of marijuana-smokers from a decade earlier. He cites a 1953 study of marijuana use, which reveals that era's smokers as having employed "very simple, almost taciturn expressions for their euphoric state," expressions consisting primarily of variations of the assertion, "I'm high."[57] But saying "I'm high" is saying very little, argues Wilmot: "It took the subculture of the 1960s to elaborate the euphoria metaphorically."[58]

One small but famous group of San Francisco pre-hippies, the Beats, had planted the seed for this metaphorical elaboration by their dabbling in Zen Buddhism--"Beat Zen"--in the 1950s.[59] It

was also during the fifties that the writer Aldous Huxley first experimented with psychedelic drugs; this proved to be a significant event in the development of the psychedelic metaphor. Wilmot argues that Huxley, by importing the terminology of Eastern religions through his own writing about mescaline, "greatly elaborated the metaphors about what it is that drugs can or may do."[60] R.E.L. Masters and J. Houston, writing at the height of the psychedelic movement, likewise pointed to the influence of writers "such as Huxley, Alan Watts, and others, who in their various writings imposed upon the psychedelic experience essentially Eastern ideas which a great many persons then assumed to be the sole and accurate way of approaching and interpreting such experience."[61] According to Jay Stevens' history of the psychedelic movement, Huxley's writing was a profound influence on Timothy Leary, whose promulgation of the mystical metaphor was finally decisive.[62]

I want to clarify my point here: in proposing the example of the psychedelic drug experience as linguistically determined, I want to present a particularly dramatic instance of the larger way in which our world is <u>always</u> shaped by our language. According to one writer on LSD, for example, the psychedelic experience "is so foreign to everyday existence that our vocabulary is lacking in words to describe precisely even that which could be described."[63] That is, the normal linguistically determined paradigm of reality is thrown into disarray by the

effects of the drug, an event which provides the user with a rare opportunity to see beyond that paradigm.

This passage from Rorty is relevant to the point I am making:

> We need to make a distinction between the claim that the world is out there and the claim that the truth is out there. . . . To say that truth is not out there is simply to say that where there are no sentences there is no truth . . . . The world is out there, but descriptions of the world are not. Only descriptions of the world can be true or false. The world on its own--unaided by the describing activities of human beings--cannot.[64]

But rarely is this linguistic nature of our world revealed to us: to our everyday experience, the world is true. Not until that experiential world is deconstructed, as it was by psychedelic drugs, may its fundamental contingency be directly experienced. In such an event of deconstruction, what emerges as a possibility is the reconstitution of the world in a different vocabulary. For the counterculture of the 1960s, the vocabulary of Eastern mysticism served that purpose.

Today, given the development of the Rortian perspective, the following objection to Eastern mysticism's shaping influence on the drug culture can be seen as nonsensical: "Armed with such [Eastern] terminology," complained Masters and Houston in 1966, "depersonalization is mistranslated into the Body of Bliss, empathy or psuedo-empathy becomes a Mystic Union, and spectacular visual effects are hailed as the Clear Light of the Void."[65] The point, of course, is that terms like "depersonalization" and "empathy" are simply the elements of a vocabulary which, though

different from the Eastern vocabulary to which these psychologists took exception, is no less a human invention. According to Rorty:

> the world does not provide us with any criterion of choice between alternative metaphors, [so] that we can only compare languages or metaphors with one another, and not with something beyond language called 'fact.'[66]

The world, adds Rorty, speaks neither Aristotelian nor Newtonian; nor, pace Masters and Houston, does it speak in the vocabulary of psychology. "The world does not speak," says Rorty. "Only we do."[67]

However, in the aftermath of the sixties (a decade which extended well into the seventies), the Eastern vocabulary has largely lost its currency in our culture; and on the Heideggerian view presented here, that development can be seen to have been inevitable. Consistent with his concerns regarding ontological translation between cultures, Heidegger has stressed that cultural transformation must be accomplished by an indigenous thinking. Western culture, he says, cannot be saved from its precipitous fall toward a technologized existence by "any takeover by Zen Buddhism or any other Eastern experiences of the world."[68] The West must think itself clear through its own native efforts.[69]

Nevertheless, I am suggesting that for a brief period during the decade of the 60s, it was the language of Eastern mystical religion which opened the linguistic territory for the psychedelic experience, and provided the vocabulary for

redescribed world. This choice to speak mystical Eastasian--though destined to be only an interim move in the search for a new ontological vocabulary--was the expression of what Rorty calls "a contest between an entrenched vocabulary which has become a nuisance and a half-formed new vocabulary which vaguely promises great things."[70] If the great things were shortlived--if the promises of Eastern mysticism for European and American youth were ultimately unfulfilled--Heidegger has suggested the reason: transplanted into the ontological environment of Western culture, the roots which the Eastern concepts traced could not reach the wellspring.

Notes

1. Martin Heidegger, "letter On Humanism," in Basic Writings, ed. and with an introduction by David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 193.

2. Martin Heidegger, Being and Time, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 31, note 3.

3. For Heidegger's view on the relation of science to Being, see Martin Heidegger, An Introduction to Metaphysics, trans. Ralph Manheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 25-26; and Martin Heidegger, What Is Called Thinking?, trans. J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 32-36.

4. Being and Time, 22-23.

5. See An Introduction to Metaphysics, section one; and Being and Time, 24-28.

6. An Introduction to Metaphysics, 4-6.

7. Joan Stambaugh, introduction to Martin Heidegger, On Time and Being, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), x.

8. Ernesto Grassi, "Rhetoric and Philosophy," trans. Azizeh Azodi, Philosophy and Rhetoric 9 (1976): 215-216.

9. See An Introduction to Metaphysics, 3 ff.; and Being and Time, 21 ff.

10. An Introduction to Metaphysics, 3.

11. Being and Time, 359.

12. Joseph J. Kockelmans, in "Panel Discussion," in Joseph J. Kockelmans, ed., On Heidegger and Language (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1972), 275.

13. L. M. Vail, Heidegger and Ontological Difference (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1972), 158.

14. Martin Heidegger, quoted in John Sallis, "Language and Reversal," in Martin Heidegger in Europe and America, ed. Edward G. Ballard and Charles E. Scott (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), 129.

15. Richard Kearney, Modern Movements in European Philosophy (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 1986), 39.

16. Joseph Kockelmans, preface to On Heidegger and Language, xii (emphasis added).

17. Martin Heidegger, "The Nature of Language," in On the Way to Language, trans. Peter D. Hertz (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 75, 85.

18. Martin Heidegger, "A Dialogue on Language," in On the Way to Language, 1-54.

19. Ibid., 31.

20. Ibid., 51.

21. Ibid., 50.

22. Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," in Poetry, Language, Thought, trans. and with an introduction by Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 74.

23. Being and Time, 171.

24. "A Dialogue on Language," 3.

25. Ibid., 4-5.

26. Ibid., 47.

27. An Introduction to Metaphysics, 102.

28. "A Dialogue on Language," 47.

29. "The Origin of the Work of Art," 73.

30. Ibid., 61.

31. Ibid., 75-76.

32. Being and Time, 269.

33. Ibid.

34. "Poetry, Language, Thought," 73.

35. Ibid., 74.

36. Ibid.

37. What Is Called Thinking?, 130.

38. "The Origin of the Work of Art," 73.

39. Vail, Heidegger and Ontological Difference, 172.

40. "A Dialogue on Language," 8.

41. Lionel Trilling, Sincerity and Authenticity (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 1.

42. What Is Called Thinking?, 18; "Letter On Humanism," 215.

43. Martin Heidegger, "The Thinker as Poet," in Poetry, Language, Thought, 11.

44. Martin Heidegger, Neitzsche (Pfullingen: Gunter Neske, 1961); quoted by Otto Poggeler in Martin Heidegger's Path of Thinking, trans. David Magurshak and Sigmund Barber (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1965), 233.

45. "Letter on Humanism," 214.

46. Martin Heidegger, Discourse on Thinking, trans John M. Anderson and E. Hans Freund, with an introduction by John M. Anderson (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 64.

47. See, for example, Miuchael Zimmerman, Eclipse of the Self (Athens, Ohio: University of Ohio Press, rev. ed. 1986); and Graham Parkes, ed., Heidegger and Asian Thought (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1972).

48. Richard Rorty, Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

49. Ibid., 7.

50. Ibid., 8.

51. Ibid., 9.

52. Thus issues of hegemony and marginalization may be seen as involving mastery of vocabulary dissemination within a culture.

53. Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity, 50.

54. Richard Wilmot, "Euphoria," in Journal of Drug Issues 15 (1985): 155-191.

55. Wilmot, 174 (emphasis added).

56. Thomas De Quincey, Confessions of an English Opium-Eater (New York: Dutton, 1907); quoted in Wilmot, 173.

57. Howard Becker, "Becoming a Marijuana User," A,erican Journal of Sociology 59 (1953): 235-243; quoted in Wilmot, 170-171.

58. Wilmot, 170.

59. Jay Stevens, Storming Heaven: LSD and the American Dream (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 112.

60. Wimot, 167.

61. R. E. L. Masters and J. Houston, The Varieties of Psychedelic Experience (New York: Dell, 1966).

62. Stevens, Storming Heaven, 140, 180, 186.

63. S. Cohen, "Lysergic Acid Diethylamide: Side Effects and Complications," Journal of Nervous and Mental Disorders 130 (1960); quoted in William H. McGlothlin, "A Chemistry for World Peace," in Journal of Drug Issues 15 (1985): 232.

64. Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity, 4-5.

65. Masters and Houston, The Variety of Psychedelic Experience. See also Stevens, Storming Heaven, 181.

66. Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity, 20.

67. Ibid., 6.

68. Martin Heidegger, "Only A God Can Save Us: Der Spiegel's interview with Martin Heidegger," trans. Maria P. Alter and John D. Caputo, Philosophy Today 20 (1976): 281.

69. To think beyond our own paradigm, of course, is problematic. Elsewhere, I have examined at length one contemporary attempt to achieve this goal; see Richard Bruce Hyde, "Saying the Clearing: A Heideggerian Analysis of the Ontological Rhetoric of Werner Erhard," Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 1991.

70. Ibid., 9.